

" On the first sheets of paper were sketches of the personages, notes about their appearance, temperament, and character. I found the *miroirs caracteristiques* of Gervaise, Coupeau, Mother Coupeau, the Lorilleux, the Boches, Goujet, and Madame Lerat. All the figures of the book were there. The notes were laconic, like those of a court registrar, but free like those of a novelist, and sprinkled with short arguments, such as this : ' Bora under those circumstances, educated in that manner, he must conduct himself in such or such a way.' In one place was the query: * What else can a rascal of this stamp do 1* ... I was struck by a sketch of Lantier's character, which was nothing but a string of adjectives, each stronger than the other, such as 'gross, sensual, brutal, egotistical, smutty.* In some places appeared the words: i Use So and So/ meaning somebody known to the author. And the whole was penned in proper sequence in a large, clear handwriting. Then I saw sketches of places outlined in ink, and as accurate as the drawings of an engineer. There were a number. The whole book was drawn : the streets of the district in which the plot was laid, with their corners and indications of their shops; the zigzags which Gervaise made to avoid her creditors, the direction taken by ITana in her Sunday escapades, the tipplers* peregrinations from music-hall to boozing-ken, and the hospital and slaughter-house, between which one terrible evening the poor ironing woman went maddened by hunger. Then Marescot's big house was drawn in minute detail; there was the whole of the top floor with the landings, the

windows, the mute's den, old Bru's hole—all those dark passages in which one detected the gasp of death, those walls which resounded as if only empty paunches were within, those doors through which came an everlasting music of blows and the cries of little ones dying from starvation. There was also a plan of Gervaise's shop and home, room by room, with indications of the beds and tables, and here and there erasures and corrections, which suggested that Zola had